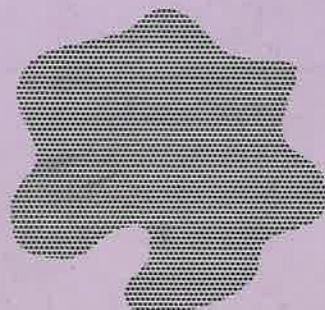
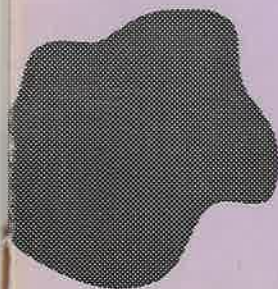
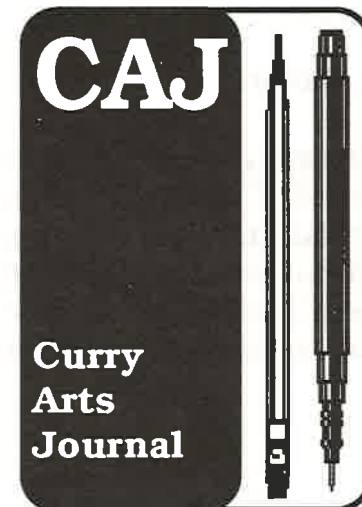


Arts Curry College Journal





Spring 1992

The CAJ, Curry College's literary and art book, is published twice a year; it welcomes submissions from all students of the college.

CAJ

Spring 1992

Editor in Chief
Pamela J. Grosz

Production Editor
Caron F. Waldenburg

Letter From The Editor:

The Curry Arts Journal is warmly dedicated to Caron F. Waldenburg for her dedication, hard work, support and friendship. Thank you Caron, we could not have done it without you. I would also like to give my thanks to Ed Meek, Ilani D'Alfonso, Maryann Gallant and Karen Benson for her help with the Alumni.

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Steps Of Life

As my foot touches the
first step, I feel a strong
wind pushing me further.

As I take more steps
the wind is stronger.

When I finally reach
the top I find peace
and comfort and am
totally relaxed.

When I have had
enough, I begin my
journey back down
the stairs. As I am
standing at the top,
the fierce wind won't
let me go. It is pulling
me and telling me to
stay, but I fight it.

I am soon at the
bottom. I cannot
turn back.

- Karen Schmidt-



by Jodi Kaplan

Relativity

by Nancy A. Bottari

Relativity.

Not Einstein's, but life's. You know, the grass is always greener . . .

In some ways I envy my dearest friend, I'll call her Allie, or anyone who can go to sleep at night and not wonder whether her legs will work well enough to rise out of bed the next morning, or whether her vision will be so clouded or otherwise impaired that she can't see her way to the night stand to turn off the alarm, never mind read the numbers on its face, or whether she will still have feeling in her legs, or arms, or down one side or the other. In this I envy Allie, and you. You know what to expect. You awaken in the morning without having to assess changing limitations in your day to day existence.

On January 22, 1988, I went to work at Brockton Hospital as a respiratory therapist as I had done every morning for a year. I left the hospital that day in a cold, black and silver wheelchair and spent the next two months as a patient in the hospital. I couldn't walk. I couldn't dress. I wore braces on both legs. I had double vision, at times no vision at all in one eye. I had no bladder control for the first few weeks. My arms were too weak to brush my own hair and they trembled incessantly. I lost my short-term memory and could not distinguish relationships in space and time. My speech was garbled. I had muscle spasms in my legs so violent and severe they could set the wheelchair in motion and often did; while I desperately tried to decide if it was the pain of the spasm, the loss of control or the self-conscious embarrassment of it all that was the worst.

The doctors called this new look Multiple Sclerosis. But I couldn't say the word for months. It seemed too real

when it was uttered aloud. Too permanent. Not like the flu, or mononucleosis or anything else that goes away. It was sort of like a new layer of skin. Only I didn't like the way it fit.

During that hospital stay my husband of fourteen years visited me four times in two months. He brought my children, 7 and 4, to see me twice. On his third visit he sat silently staring at my rebellious body slouched in the wheelchair and said, "you're never gonna get out of that chair."

That was four years ago. 1988. I am better now. I leave my wheelchair in the shed most of the time. Maybe it's spite; in May I will graduate from Curry.

Twenty three months after my release from that hospital stay, my children and I were no longer safe in our home. I obtained a restraining order against my husband and we remained separated. Our divorce was finalized in 1991.

In addition to physical abuse, my ex-husband was a master of the emotional. From time to time before he left, he would engage me in philosophical conversations such as, "Don't you ever think about suicide? You don't? If I were you, I'd jump off the Tobin Bridge." Or, "If you want to do it, I'll help you." And, "You know, it would have been easier for all of us if you had terminal cancer."

So there I stood, alone with two children to raise. Who the heck was I? I had spent 34 years building me. Where was I?

I had learned there was a cold, dark, empty place in my heart; where anger and fear and self-pity hung out. I had come to feel pain beyond the physical which could claim no rival in intensity. I had come to learn that life could hurt so deeply that all at once the good seemed as if it never were, and could never be again. But I had also learned other things.

There were times when I knew I couldn't go on;
other times I never doubted I would. It came to me one day;
I'm not really alone, though I'm only human and forget
sometimes, because we all have obstacles. Some we are
forced to display like old sweaters or torn jeans, some
obstacles we can hide in our pockets or sweep under the
mats at our front door. Some of us, maybe most, feel some
elusive, spectral, gnat-like pest from our past that tries to
catch up with us to pick away and gnaw relentlessly at our
heels, to sting us with self-doubt and grind us down to the
bone.

Take me. It is this nipping phantom for whom I turn
every now and then to look back, just to keep my perspec-
tive; to remember where I've been. Never forget that. But
if I've learned anything, I've found it's too easy to stumble if
I don't turn 'round front again to look where I'm setting
down my canes while I keep on going wherever it is I am
going.

But back to relativity.

Remember my friend Allie? Allie and I get together
whenever we can now. Sometimes we cry, but mostly we
just try to be a part of life. See, Allie has just been diag-
nosed with AIDS.

* * *

LOVE
LOVE IS
BEAUTIFUL
LOVE IS
UGLY
LOVE IS
WARMTH
LOVE IS
COLD
LOVE IS
SERENITY
LOVE IS
TORTURE
LOVE IS
TRUE
LOVE IS
FALSE
LOVE IS
FUNNY
LOVE IS
MAD
LOVE IS
HAPPY
LOVE IS
SAD

LOVE IS A NEVER ENDING CIRCLE OF PUNISHMENT

- NICOLE ENGEL -

Not Worth My Time

You're not worth my time.
You appear to blow me off.
It seems as though everything I say
comes out as a mime.
You say that you're not a planner,
but you're coming off more and more
as a scammer.
I don't ask much from you,
only that you follow through.
I am starting to doubt
that you are all that you seem to be.
I don't want to be hurt,
although that seems to be unavoidable.
You say that you don't want to hurt me,
then it starts all over again.
We're back at square one,
running in circles.
I am so bummed.
Don't you realize that whatever you do
affects someone else?
You make me feel so good, yet so bad.
All at the same time it is the best
and the worst feeling I've ever had.
Then again, maybe you don't know how
I feel about you.
But it is rare that you give us any time alone.
When we are with others, you're either

using your sarcastic wit, trying to be funny,
or you don't bother talking to me at all.
I feel as though you are playing me as a game.
Sometimes I wonder if I don't mention our
potential plans if you would forget about me.
All I know is that I don't want to give to
you anymore.
I try to give to you what I have,
but it doesn't get us anywhere.
Maybe this relationship isn't meant to be.
Right now, the only thing that I can say
is that I am leaving it up to you.
the only thing I can do,
is to wait and see.

- Dianne Brennan-

Saying Goodbye

by Tammy Mahoney

"You girls have been really good to me. I have always been proud of everything you have done. No grandmother could ever ask for better granddaughters."

She must have known that this was the last time she would be able to tell me this. As she was telling me this she was shaking involuntarily. This, the doctors explained, was the after effect of her last stroke. Her hand kept opening and closing and she couldn't keep her head straight. She looked so uncomfortable and all I could do was sit down beside her and put her head on my shoulder to give her support. It was a strange and unfamiliar feeling. My grammy, my mother's mother who used to take care of me, was depending on our help.

About two years ago my grandmother started having heart attacks and strokes quite frequently. After each one she came back weaker and weaker. We had to do everything for her. I remember after the second stroke she was put on a machine that helped her breathe. It made an awful hissing sound and it made my grandmother seem almost unreal. It seemed like every time she started to take a breath the machine would violently take over. It was as if it was pushing life out of her instead of in her. I had to bite my lip to keep from crying, and even then a few tears escaped. I just held her hand and told her that I loved her.

My grandmother was really special. Everyone's grandmother has some special quality that sets her apart from other grandmothers. My grandmother was special to us because she was proud of us. Her eyes told me that she loved me every time she looked at me. She always called my sister and me "her girls." And just like a lot of other proud grandmothers, she used to brag about us. She went to all of our concerts and award nights that she could.

We used to go to visit my grandmother every day when she lived with my uncle. We would usually go over for lunch. I remember that I always thought that her peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were the best. She used to cut them into triangles instead of squares. Of course to a little kid this made it taste better. Mom could never make sandwiches like Grammy.

Then my grandmother came to live with us. I remember feeling so happy because my grammy was going to be with us every day. It was great too. She would show me pictures of people in her past that were special to her. She told me about when she got her first cat. It was when she was sick in bed for about a week and her brothers brought it home for her to cheer her up. She named him Thomas Angelface White, a long name for such a little cat. She told me that when my sister and I first saw her after we were adopted we ran right up to her and hugged her.

My grandmother looked a lot like other grandmothers that I see. She was about 5'1 although she kept "insisting" that she was 5'7 so that she could be taller than I am. She was stout, which made it nicer to hug her. Her face was soft and wrinkled with freckles from the sun. Her eyes were brown and soft and they danced when she laughed. Her hair used to be strawberry blonde when she was younger and she kept it strawberry blonde by frequent visits to the beauty parlor. I remember when my sister and I went food shopping with Grammy once and people told us that we looked just like her. They said that if we got lost all people would have to do is look for kids who looked just like their grandmother. I would just smile and be happy that I had strawberry blonde hair just like Grammy.

Just like other grandmothers, she spoiled us. She would give us sweets and bring us out to eat all the time. We were so used to my grandmother bringing us out to lunch when she came over, that every time we saw her car pull up to our house we ran to get our car seats. She also gave us the pennies that piled up in her wallet and made

her bag heavy. We were so proud that she gave them to us and not to my other cousins.

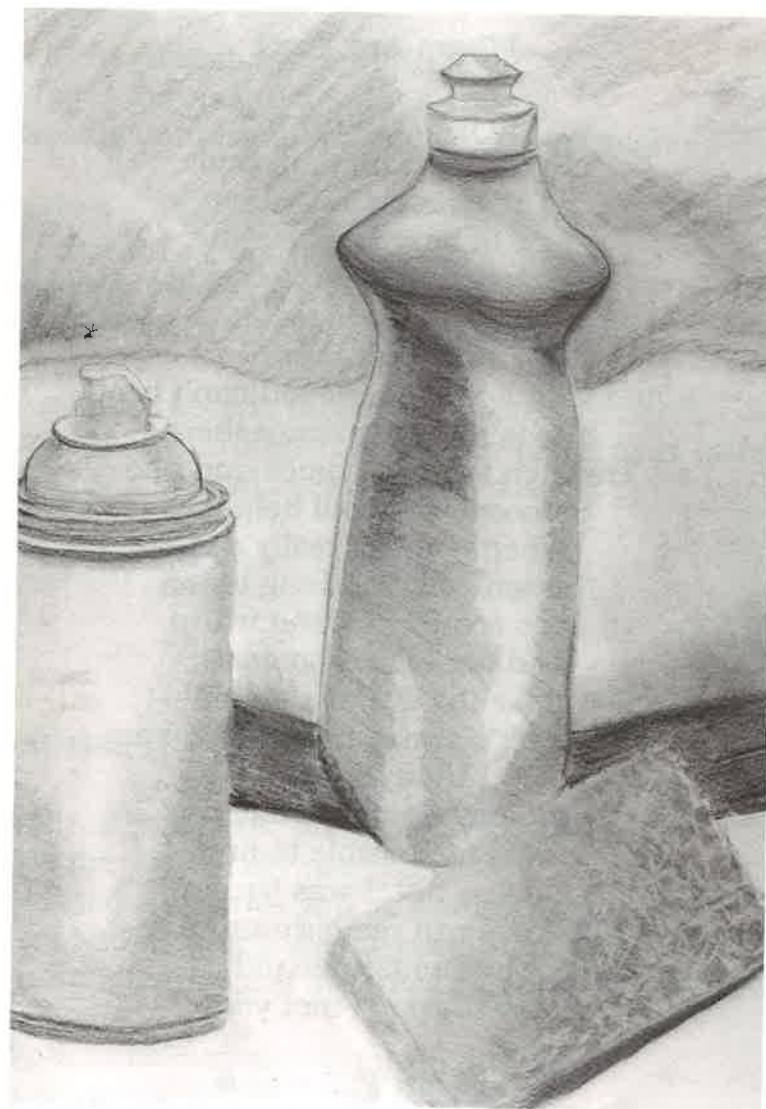
As I sat next to her that day, holding her head, I realized that she would never be able to take us out to lunch or make us peanut butter and jelly sandwiches ever again. I remembered all the times that I had thought that my grandmother would be around forever. At that moment I knew that she wouldn't.

She went to the hospital that night. She lived for about a week. Then on June 29th, the day of my parents' anniversary, the doctor called us to tell us that he didn't think she would survive the week. We decided to go in and visit her later that day. Later, while we were getting ready to go, the phone rang. Somehow we all knew who was on the other end of the line even before Mom answered it. It was the doctor telling us that Grammy had died about an hour before. Even though we knew that she would die, it was still a shock. We were all ready to go to see her and now it was too late. I just remembered what I said to her that day when she was shaking. I said:

"I know that you love us. We love you too. You're the best Grammy that anyone ever had. I'm glad that out of all the grandmothers in the world, we got you."

And I knew that I really did say goodbye to her.

* * *



by Rebecca Reiber

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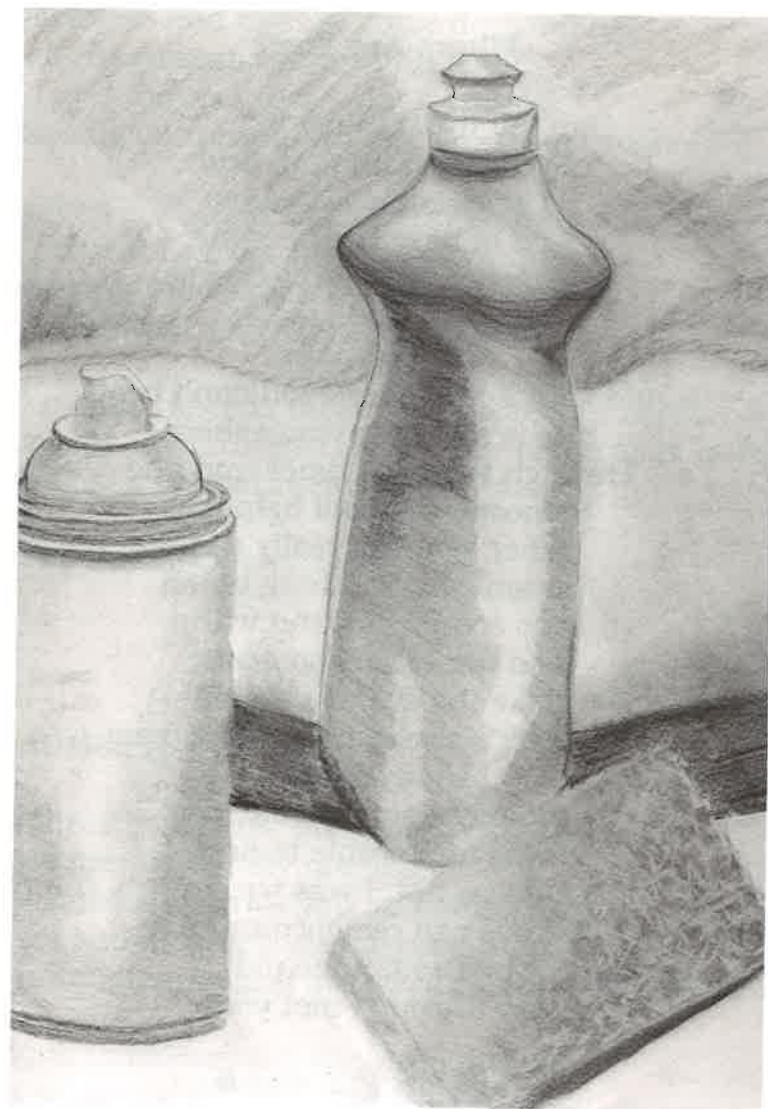
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"I know that you love us. We love you too. You're the best Grammy that anyone ever had. I'm glad that out of all the grandmothers in the world, we got you."

And I knew that I really did say goodbye to her.

* * *



by Rebecca Reiber

Where Are You?

All through my life
I've been waiting to find
The girl of my dreams
And to have her be mine
In my dreams she is caring
Sensitive and sweet
Beautiful, kind
And with a happiness you can't beat
She is someone who's there
Through the good times and bad
Someone who will help you
When you feel really sad
Her smooth, soothing touch
Is so comforting and warm
And her kiss is so gentle
Like the eye of a storm
Whenever I awoke from this dream
In my mind
I thought someone like this
Was impossible to find
I guess not, I was wrong
Dreams can really come true
I waited, mine did
On the day I met you.

- Anthony P. Barrone-

Untitled

Darkness and unease come descending,
light fragments resolve into night,
shapes indirect direct day's ending.
Passing on through in the blue/silver night.

Soft as a whisper in a dream arrives,
a pursuit bearing the nightmare inside,
bringing the hunter seeking the hunted.
Who chases who in the myriad of night?

The chase speeds through the forest of black,
amorphous flittings through the patterns of chaos.
The pack behind breathes fiery attack.

- Petr Swedock-

Untitled II

And softly, beauty that is so softly rare,
Kiss me, invent my dreams.
In dreams I'm with you so always near,
Kept within that softest moment unseen,
On my dreams that are so severe and sweetly keen.

My dreams, kinetic, exquisite and alive,
In so complete a thought as you.
Your dreams, are they half as ardent?
And I was the cause if I could but do.

- Petr Sweedock-

Mystical Wisdom

Let yourself free
hold onto your dreams . . .

life may seem out of reach
close your eyes,
breathe deep inside,

relax your mind
follow me to the other side,
leave your worries behind,

seek and find
the spiritual world is wide,
you will see,

listen to me . . .

wild as the wind
the soul lives,
death is not the end,

warm as the sun
keep the faith,
the devil shall run,

do not fight
brothers and sisters,
there is light,

walk the road
eternal life will unfold
I was told,

Mystical wisdom is old . . .

- Francis John Mullray-

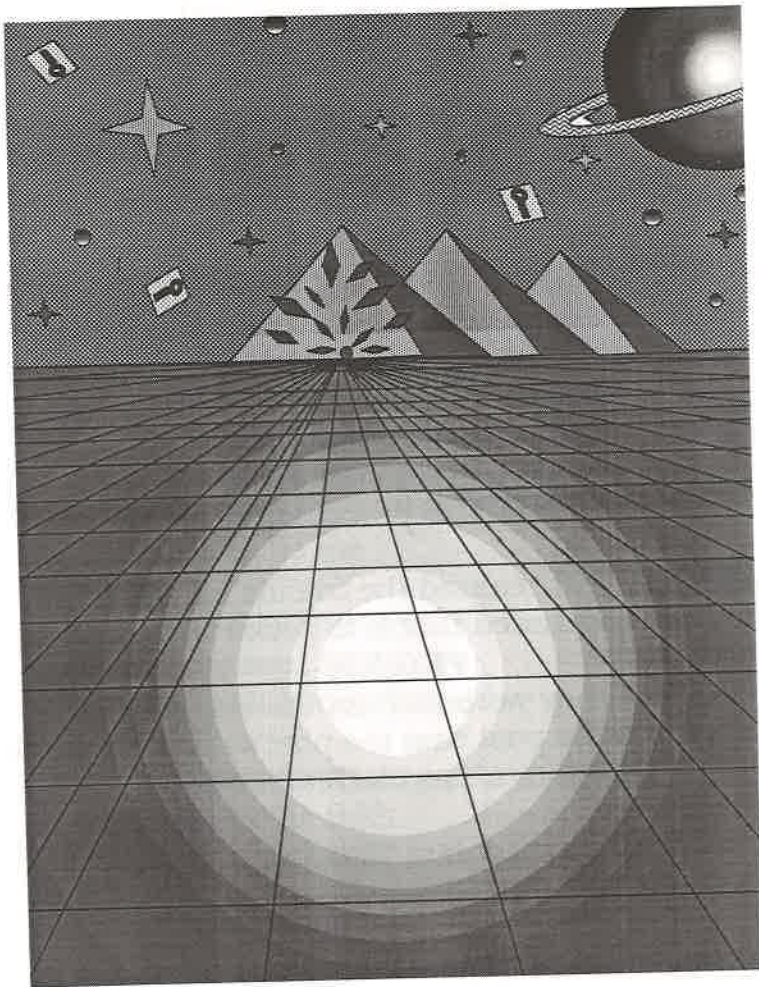
Friends

The poet went to visit old friends.
FRIENDS that he went through immaturity with
FRIENDS who he thought would be the same
through thick and thin.
FRIENDS he thought he knew
from outside and within.
Something happened.
FRIENDS had changed.

After the poet realized the friends had changed,
he then concluded that it is better to remember

FRIENDS
the way they were and not the way they are.
For it is in the past that the poet's most pleasant
thoughts of his **FRIENDS** will be.

- Adam Yenkin-



by Mathew Belcastro

Grandmother

When I was younger,
you showed me how to be strong.
Your sneezes woke me up
when the morning dew was shining
on the green grass.

Took me for walks,
taught me about tobacco
farming,
how to act like a proper young lady.

You were older, knew
what was good
or bad for you.

When you were hurting,
you did not tell a soul.
In your heart you knew
something was wrong.

A passage home, and
then you were no longer there
died in peace, just the
way you wanted it.
Together with your husband
that is all you wanted.

You kept things in order
around the house, but now
the order is GONE... GONE...
GONE...

- Alison Upson-

A Comforting Place

by Amy Beth Sullivan

There was a small, white, wooden building on Main Street with a serene and comforting facade that contrasted with the frenzy hectic style of the city. The cornerstone walkway that winded towards the front door was surrounded by carefully planted lady slippers and petunias. The gold framed sign that hung from the large glass door showed the silhouette of a ballet dancer in the arabesque position. The calligraphy letters etched below the figurine read Madame Victoria's School of Dance.

Once inside, a high ceiling supported by wooden beams opened up like a massive skylight and shone on the students as they danced. Every inch of the oak walls was covered with sheets of mirrors that reflected all the beauty of dance created in the studio. Scattered around the platform where Madame Victoria taught her lessons, were a number of old classical albums that had strayed from their resting place in the corner. This corner, in the left front of the room, was also the home of the ancient phonograph that repeatedly beat out the rhythm of each musical piece circling below its antique needle. In the back right corner was a flowered shower curtain that sectioned off a small area to serve as a changing room. Traditional Danskin, black leotards and pink tights hung from a clothesline here waiting to be filled with graceful bodies. Under the array of dance apparel was a cardboard box where satin toe shoes were piled, each pair initialized by the owner.

Where the mirrors finally stopped by the front and back doors where a speck of bare wall was left, frames of dancers from centuries past and, also of newer modern works, were placed with great care. Madame Victoria always aimed for balance. Beneath the beautiful pictures were inspiring quotes to give the students incentive when the work became painful and arduous. The one which stated, "Strive to be the best you can be," was Madame's favorite.

I gazed at Madame Victoria as she stood in the middle of the room admiring her long worked for studio and reviewing a routine she planned to teach later that day. I knew it had been a long time since she had performed with a company, but her stage presence had surely never left. Several times a year she managed to partake in community shows, help judge competitions, or become a welcomed guest teacher in others' classes. Her talent was never scoffed at. Although she was getting along in her years, her body still moved with such elegance and delicacy that she made anyone in her presence feel awkward. She appeared today, as she did every day, the epitome of poise with her long dark hair swept into a bun that was secured tightly on the top of her head. The muscles in her legs were strong and protruding offsetting her other dainty features. A stale breeze of air had entered the room and as she moved from step to step, her sheer skirt fluttered around her thin body. Her face was like one carved from a theatrical mask. Every detail was so exact, refined and enhanced with understanding eyes and the most genuine smile ever seen. No, Madame Victoria would never stand to be called Vicki.

The front door swung open bringing with it the afternoon sun that lit up the studio in a prism of colors. Three of Madame's students from my advanced beginners class arrived. Lizzy's two braided pony tails flopped from her head like the ears of a puppy dog and overpowered her small, young body. I saw Madame's chest heave as she let out a sigh. She had told Lizzy a countless number of times to pull those braids back.

The rainbow colored light lingered on Elizabeth's chestnut hair and warmed her huge brown eyes. A weak smile parted in her lips. She was a mature girl for eight and she stole Madame Victoria's heart, as well as mine. She also had much promise as a dancer. Just last week I heard Madame say that her technique was improving and her muscles were beginning to develop.

Josephine, or "Jo," as she preferred to be called raced across the room and almost ploughed over Elizabeth. She skidded to a stop by the changing room, kicked off her latest pair of leather high-top sneakers, and took her dance

clothes out from her duffel bag. At the age of thirteen, Jo was older than the rest of us in the class. Her broad frame and dark ebony hair emphasized her strong personality. Madame had told us how Jo would rather be out playing basketball or street hockey during her afternoons, but her parents had enrolled her in ballet class to teach her what they considered the attributes of a young girl. I wondered what exactly were the attributes of a young girl, or lady as my grandmother would say. Madame Victoria was very thoughtful like that and I knew she did not like to see children forced into doing things that they didn't have their hearts into; but I do not think that Jo seemed to mind half as much as she did when she first started two months ago. Although she would not admit it, her heart for ballet was reluctantly growing with each passing day. Jo snapped her wad of grape bubble gum over and over again. With one last inhale she blew a large bubble and then spit her gum out into the metal waste can next to her. Madame Victoria chuckled, and I couldn't resist to either, Jo sure was a piece of work.

My eyes focused back towards the front door as they examined curly, red-headed Maggie continuing to strut her way across the room, obviously practicing her new walk of the day. She exaggerated the sway of her hips from side to side, tossed her mop of hair over her squared shoulders, and meticulously planted her left hand on her waist. Certainly a lot for anyone to concentrate on all at once. Madame Victoria always said that she wished Maggie put as much effort into her dancing. I intently watched the fast movement of her lips as the sound waves from her high-pitched voice inevitably found their way to my ears. Her voice appeared to be rattling on non-stop since she had entered the building, talking to anyone in earshot enough to listen. In her case, the entire United States. You could usually get a thorough summary of an eight hour day in five minutes if you didn't get lost in all the mumble jumble and if your attention span could tolerate it. Today, Maggie looked like she had come for a jazz dance lesson. Her hair was loaded with mousse, causing it to spring up out of control. She wore shiny purple spandex with an oversized

multi-colored, polkadot shirt. To top off her ensemble were black leather boots that were highlighted with rhinestones at the trim. It was hard to believe that she was actually a year younger than I. Yes, Maggie was eleven going on twenty-one and definitely an actress in every aspect of the word.

I had been idly sitting on the hill in back of the studio for most of the day. It was here that I purposely made myself a loner for the day. For the past five hours I had satisfactorily occupied myself with picking at the weeds by my feet, watching the activity of the city, and daydreaming about the person I would like to become when I grew up. Today, for some reason, I hadn't felt up to facing another day of seventh grade, so I played hooky. I liked the spot I had chosen where I was able to observe everything from a distance without really being a part of it. Even though I periodically breathed in some of the exhaust from the street and the hum of the city was noisy, I still thought this was the nicest, most peaceful place I had ever been.

A homeless man had approached me and begged for change early this morning. I felt sorry for him, so I reached into the pocket of my denim overalls and gave him my lunch money. I didn't think that my sixty-five cents could help him all that much, but he had cracked a smile when I handed him the change and I knew that I had made him feel better. I am always able to pick up on how other people are feeling; it's something my mom calls an intuitive sense. It was funny, though, for the first time I had really felt proud of myself and very important.

I guess that is the real reason why I skipped school and came here today. I had been feeling pretty down lately. I don't think it's any one specific thing that's bothering me. It's more like a combination of a lot of things. To start with, my name is bland and boring and I am sure that my parents had run out of creativity when they named me Erin Jean. After five children they must have. I always wished that my name was something more exotic or at least had more syllables in it, like Yolanda or Alexandria. Sometimes I pretended that I was one of those beautiful, rich ladies doused with jewels and fancy clothes. It seemed I wish that

more and more every time I put on another one of my sisters' hand-me-downs and every time I looked in the mirror.

I have stick straight brown hair that never looks glamorous or bouncy like the manes of hair I have seen in my older sister, Mary's, fashion and beauty magazines. It is sort of just there, growing out from my scalp. When the sun hits it, it only seems to look browner, not like the fascinating golden or red highlights that some of my friends have. Maybe I will ask my mom to curl it tonight and tie those ribbons in it that I love so much. That always makes me feel better. As I thought about this, my glasses slipped down and once again I was reminded of those horrid things that dominate my face.

Everyday I have to place them over my eyes and cover them up. As a matter of fact, my eyes are one of my features that I really do like. They are a bluish-green with long dark lashes that my dad says will soon hit the sky or cause a young man to come and whisk me away when I am older. However, the only thing I feel them hit all day long are those stupid goggles.

From way up here on the top of my hill, I am able to see straight into the dance studio. Earlier I had watched Madame practice part of the dance routine that my class has been learning. Madame is one of the truly gorgeous older women that I know. My mom is nice looking, but not in the same way that Madame is. Sometimes I think that there is a ball of light that follows her around with every movement she makes and it sends out love, warmth, and happiness to everyone who is nearby. My mom also has her share of wonderful qualities, but this is the one characteristic of Madame that I really admire. I love Madame Victoria. If she knew I had been out here all day instead of studying my lessons at school, she would probably be very disappointed with me. But I cannot think of that now because this has been one of my most favorite days to date.

I, once again, caught a glimpse of Elizabeth strolling across the floor. Gosh everyone loves Lizzy. Me too. She is so cute, petite, and above all, sweet. I wish I could be more like her. That is impossible, though, with my tall lanky body. It makes me feel awkward, especially at school where

I tower over all the boys in my class. Every one keeps telling me that I will blossom into a young lady soon who is not at all shy or lacking of self confidence. Well, I am ready now, even if I am only twelve years old.

I decide to snap out of this state I am in. Maybe it's just a phase I'm going through, as all adults I know constantly say. Besides, it is about time I got in there for ballet. I do not want to miss this part of the day. Once I am inside there I feel coordinated and angelic. I take a gulp of air, race down the hill, around the front of the building and into my fantasy world.

I pushed open the heavy glass door with the swing of one arm, feeling invigorated from my gratifying day. No school, no teachers, or mean kids to worry about, just me and my thoughts. On days like today I can usually clear my mind of all the cluttered thoughts that have accumulated. I often wonder if other children my age have as many thoughts as I do. I guess it is really abnormal the way I always seem to ponder over or analyze a situation. For some reason, I can't focus on simple things that appear at the surface. I am always looking for some deeper kind of meaning. So, maybe it is abnormal, but I think my mind is happier when its empty space is occupied.

The musky smell of the studio hit my nose and I instantly became glad to be back inside my familiar performing stage. Even though yesterday had just been my last visit, it felt like an eternity ago. It must be something my oldest sister, Alicia, is always talking about or claiming she can sense. This all started over the summer when she met her boyfriend, Jim. He looks just like my parents did in the photos I saw from the 1960's. He has long straggly hair and an earring in his left ear. I hadn't thought that hippies still existed in the 1980's. For the longest time I actually thought that Jim called himself dude and everyone else as well. Alicia's really berserk anyways. She stalks around our house with these beaded headbands and vests draped over her. She and Jim are forever going to these group seances and to get their tarot cards read. My parents are convinced that she is experiencing some kind of identity crisis. All I know is that her aura is making me sick.

Anyways, Madame Victoria's School of Dance has a special aura. I haven't tried to figure out what it is and I don't plan to. This is one thing that I have elected not to ponder over. I just know that it's there and it makes me feel good inside.

I glanced over at Madame who was still practicing our dance lesson. She was so engrossed in it that I don't think she noticed me come in. The new steps looked pretty tricky. I walked over towards the shower curtain to go get changed.

"Hey! String bean! Where were you at school today?"

That was Jo being her typical self. I am never offended by her nickname for me. I think that it is more of an endearment than anything, besides, she is a good friend.

"Not there, brute!," I replied in my best sarcastic tone. Brute is my charm name for Jo. I caught Madame looking over at me with discerning eyes.

"No kidding! You weren't there? That was a given. Now, why weren't you there?"

"I decided not to go. I just didn't feel like it today."

Jo looked me up and down, shook her head, and uttered, "Nice life!"

I shrugged my shoulders and smiled weakly. She smiled back and whispered, "Maybe you and me should try it together some time."

Yeah, maybe I thought.

Jo and I are the only ones from dancing that attend the same school. The city is so large that there seems to be a school on every other block. Maggie goes to a private school and she has to wear an ugly plaid uniform everyday. I looked over at her by the mirror in the back corner, her usual spot. She was busy poofing her hair and talking to herself in the mirror. Maybe she had given up on the rest of us listening to her.

Elizabeth attends a school clear across the other side of the city in a more affluent section. I called over to Elizabeth who was already practicing at the barre. "Hi Lizzy." She came running to me with open arms giving me a big hug. This is how she greets all of us everyday.

"Hi Erin Jean. How are you doing?"

"Oh, I'm fine. Come her for a sec." I grasped her flopping braids, pulled them back, and secured them on the top of her head with some extra bobby pins I had in my bag.

"There, all set," I said.

She looked up at me with her toothless smile and said, "Thanks, I forgot all about them."

Madame turned around to face us and clapped her hands to get our attention. "Okay girls, let's get started. We have a lot to learn in the routine today, so find a place at the barre to warm up." She walked over to the phonograph and put on a classical piece from the Nutcracker. We are working on a dance for the production at Christmas. It is only a month away now. She turned back around to start the warm up and added in a stern voice, "Oh, and if anyone is chewing gum, dispose of it now." Gum is one of her pet peeves and she does not tolerate ballerinas chewing it. Luckily Jo had got rid of hers earlier.

Maggie, finally bored with her own reflection, brushed by me on her way to the barre. Her eyes sparkled as they winked at me with a friendly hello. Maggie means well and I do like her, but I am still analyzing her.

The warm up was shorter than usual and that pleased me because I really hate to work on technique at the barre. I think Elizabeth is the only one who has never complained about it. She is forever charming and positive about everything and Madame often calls her a Godsend. I truly believe she is, too. Always a pleasure to be around. I think that Maggie, Jo, and I try to live up to the standards that she sets, even though she is a few years younger.

We moved out to the floor to learn our new steps. I made sure to left my ribcage, hold my stomach tightly in, tuck my bottom under, spread my turnout as far as I could make it go, keep my shoulders down, lift my head high, and of course, smile. Now, I was already to begin. We had spent a great deal of time learning the proper way to carry your body as you danced. I think I have finally mastered it.

Madame turned to place the needle on the spinning vinyl album. The music quickly filled the room as I began to count out the beat. I have become so familiar with this

music from the Nutcracker that I can now recognize it on the first note. It corresponds with the mice scene in the ballet and it is the piece that my class is dancing to. The four of us are the mice who try to steal the toy Nutcracker away in the middle of the night. It is a fun dance and we get to wear these huge, floppy costumes with long, wiry whiskers.

Madame walked up to the platform to demonstrate the new steps for us. Everything looked pretty basic and normal until she got down on the floor, lay on her back, and kicked her feet in the air. We all burst out laughing. It looked so silly, especially when Madame was doing it. She is always so classy and this did not seem like something she'd ever imagine doing or teaching us. She began to explain to us that this was when the mice would die in the scene and that we should really act it up and make it look extravagant. I didn't know we were going to die.

Elizabeth was the first to volunteer to try the new steps. She performed them all perfectly until she got down on the floor to try kicking her feet in the air. She must have stirred up too much dust from the floor because she began sneezing uncontrollably. Poor Lizzy, she was allergic to nearly everything, but it never seemed to bother her. She just picked herself up again and started all over. This time she really gave it her all and her dancing was magnificent. As soon as she finished, she quickly rushed to the back of the room and fumbled through her clothes in her ballet box. She was undoubtedly searching for her asthma inhaler. I thought I had heard her start to wheeze. As good as Lizzy is, she always has to be careful not to over exert herself. Last year she had a pretty bad attack during the dress rehearsal for one of the community shows that we danced in. She had to be taken to the hospital to have her lung reinflated. She scared me half to death. This year, though, she seems to have her asthma under control. Elizabeth does not want us to fuss over her. She'd alert us if she was in need of help.

I watched her shake the small container vigorously and press the top to dispense her life supporting mist. She inhaled the fine stream with one deep breath. She then threw the blue plastic container back into her ballet box

and smiled at the rest of us over her shoulder. This was her signal to let us know she was okay. She hurriedly ran back to the dance floor to continue.

I was next to try the routine and I think I did quite well. I only had a hard time with the pirouette turn. But, I'll go home and practice it. Practice makes perfect is what Madame always tells us. Maggie and Jo then followed with their own individual versions. They also did a fine job. We then worked as a group and performed the new steps together. I was cautious not to agitate the dust beneath my slippers as I fell to act out my death as a mouse. I think Maggie and Jo were extra careful, also. Madame said we all made good first attempts, but it needed lots and lots of work.

Class ended and we scurried to get ready to leave. We aren't allowed to loiter after class or else we'll get in the way of the company members who have class after ours. I got dressed quickly to head outside with the rest of the gang. Madame called out a goodbye and told me not to go sitting on top of hills anymore. I blushed. She knew I was embarrassed. I dashed outside. Maggie, Jo, and Elizabeth were already waiting for me at the corner under the glow of the street light. Together we crossed the busy street and headed for our after dancing hangout, Rebecca's Pastries. We always came here to wait for our parents to pick us up. The owners of the cafe are my next door neighbors, so it's a safe place to stay. Through the dusk of the streets, I could faintly see all the Christmas decorations that were already up. That was funny, it wasn't even Thanksgiving yet.

We entered the warmth of the little pastry shop. Bertha, one of the owners of the store was there waiting for us with treats. By the end of the day she always had left-over's that she'd give to us for free. I selected my favorite, a glazed honey dip donut. I always got the same thing because it was the only kind I liked. Elizabeth got some new kind of powdered donut. I followed Jo and Maggie over to a booth in the back of the shop. Maggie was rambling on about some eighth grader at her school who liked her. Wow, I thought to myself, I still liked to believe the boys in my class had cooties. Once again, I decided to tune her

out. Anyways, Jo and I were concentrating on our game of thumb wrestling.

Lizzy was still at the counter, probably talking to Bertha, but when I turned to call her over I saw that Bertha wasn't there. Why was Lizzy still standing there for no reason? All of the sudden I heard a weird chortling noise and saw Elizabeth collapse backwards to the cold cement floor.

"Bertha," I screamed, "come quick!" Bertha came flying out of the back room and was beside the rest of us instantly. We were all surrounding Elizabeth.

I froze. I couldn't make my body move to try and help her. Oh dear God what was wrong now, another allergy? Where's her inhaler? I searched the store with my eyes in search of her pink box. A faint whisper came from Lizzy's, now blue, lips. Was that word that she uttered goodbye? Was I only imagining this? I saw her huge brown eyes open very wide and roll towards the back of her head. Oh no, this was reality.

Everything became blurry to me. I thought I heard the siren of an ambulance getting closer. Piercing screams encircled me and I realized they were my own.

Eventually my parents came for me, but I don't remember leaving the scene. I just keep seeing Elizabeth's eyes becoming blank and rolling backwards. The phone rang later during the night and my mother came into my room to tell me that Lizzy had died. I was right. It was that powdered donut. She had an allergic reaction to it. How could a powdered donut kill someone? It wasn't fair. Not sweet little Elizabeth.

...

I celebrated my thirteenth birthday last week. It has been six months since my wonderful friend with the long braids went on to heaven. Oh, I bet heaven is a much more beautiful place than earth. The year has been hard, especially at dancing; we all just miss Elizabeth so terribly. More than anything, though, I think I have learned a lot about myself. I no longer envy other people or try to live up to them. I'm happy being myself and a new thought has entered my mind: there is probably something that other

people admire in me. I never thought of that before, but I think I'll keep this thought in my mind for a very long time. Jo, Maggie, Madame, and I will be just fine. I don't get down about myself too often anymore, and it's been a long time since I've sat on top of that hill. Although I lost Lizzy, I was able to accept myself and start living for me. Madame Victoria's studio will always be comforting but I don't have to go there to be happy anymore. "Take things for what they are" is something my mom always says. I think I am. So I've tried to stop analyzing and pondering and thinking too much. Elizabeth was Elizabeth, Maggie is Maggie, Jo is Jo, and I am me. Proud of it, too.

* * *

The Mirror

Your face is smiling
But when I look into your eyes,
I see pain.

You try to hide it with the grin.
I know.
It's because of him, isn't it?
You thought You knew him,
Sweet and kind.

He didn't seem like the others.
Then, You got a clear glimpse of
His True Self.

Don't try to hide the pain
From Me.

I know just what You are thinking.
I was Your first Best Friend.
I hate to say it, but
"I told You so."
I didn't want to see You get hurt;
Sometimes you just have to take a chance.
Win or lose, life goes on.

I reapply my lipstick and
Walk away from the mirror.

- Anonymous-

The Evening

"You understand me,"
I've said that before.
In the beginning,
when I believed it too.

"I love you,"
was whispered more than once,
lying in bed,
during a pause from life.

But life went on after that night,
and I've found myself unchanged.
My fears are just as close,
my goals are still as far away,
and clarity has not yet come to my eyes.

But the touches and jokes that we shared,
Still flirt through my mind.
When I'm driving to work,
Just getting by.

- Greg Hanigan-



by Dianne Brennan

Still Water

I fear that you are drowning
an expulsion of reality in your lungs
mercury pushes you under
life jacket severed

the strength within must arise
to send the ever-needed air
through your veins
pushing your ass up to the goddess

I can't pull you out this time
you cut off my hands
before you jumped

- Stacey Harris-

Carpe Diem

Dreary Days
Sometimes Bring wry light
Enhanced by flowers

Wrinkle up your nose - Smile

Twofold Nights
Sometimes Bring anguish
Wrought with charm

Be Still -
Another dawn and dusk will approach

- Alecia Cohen-

Right Here With Me

When I reached out
For a hand I could not see
I found the person within myself
That I wanted so much to be.
The hand held me up
When I started to fall
Dried my tears when I had to cry
Felt my pain no matter how small.
How many times
have I thrown aside
Your loving touch
Because of my pride?
I was blind before
But now I'm starting to see
I was never alone.
That you were there all along
Silently helping; waiting
Always standing right here with me
Sharing my pain
Waiting for your love to set me free.

- Tammy Mahoney-



By Liza Burnett

Sleeping Beauty

Strength pours from him.
He walks in;
a smile is quick to his lips.
He pulls me to him.
Kisses embrace my
everlasting wish.
A whisper of love
trickles like honey
from his sweet tongue.

I lick his lips only wanting to taste his sweetness.

His laughter fills the air
with radiance like an orange
glowing sunset.
His smile sends me drifting
like snow, so pure and simple.
His touch is like lightening
frightening and exciting,
me
always waiting for
the next time it will strike.

- Michele Rosenberg-

Cinamon Rose

Diamond jars wait
on an oak shelf,
Blurring the crimson
image of wealth.

Petaled treasure
of sweet smelling breath;
enduring grace
beyond a dry death.

My cinamon rose
reminds me of how
One is remembered
in parting from now.

The earth-minty self
physically seems
somewhere beyond
The baby's breath dreams.

- Kat Caithness-

The Big Night

by Dianne Brennan

I looked into the mirror, trying to make myself look perfect. I thought I looked good, but the big question was, would he think I looked good? I had my black turtleneck on with my 501 button-fly jeans and my black flats. I was going back and forth, trying to decide two things. Should I put my hair in a ponytail, or should I keep it down? The other big decision I had to make was whether or not to wear my favorite black blazer. Would I have too much black on? God, I was so nervous. It's funny how feminism goes out the door when you fall for a guy.

Tonight was going to be a big night, at least it was for me. I was going out with a guy at school that I had a tremendous crush on. I was sure that he knew it too. We would tease each other every time we were together. I've never seen him tease anyone the way he teased me. We were in the same Life After Death class. After every speaker who came to the class, we would have the conversation over and over again. He would look at me and say with a smile on his face, "That's bullshit," just to get me going because he knew that I believed in it.

I would then smile back at him and say, "Now Peter, I know you believe in it!"

"Dianne, I don't know about you. I am a rational man, Dianne. Do you really think that someone of my stature would believe in such crap?" He would say this while looking at me and shaking his head.

"Yes, I do," I would shoot back to him.

I looked at the clock. It was 7 p.m. on the dot. I thought to myself, "He's going to be here any minute! Well, then again, you're going out with Peter, he's never on time."

Sure enough, that's when I heard a knock at the door.

"Who is it? I said, hoping it wasn't him so I could buy some extra time.

"It's Peter," he said.

"Just a minute, Pete," I said.

Of course at that point I went into a small state of panic. Guys hate it when a girl is late. I went with what I had; I decided to keep my hair down, I put on a little Liz Claiborne and grabbed my black blazer. I walked to the door trying to be as cool as a cucumber and opened it.

"Hi Pete. Come in for a second while I get my pocket-book," I said with a nervous smile. I checked him out and he looked fine. He was wearing a white Polo shirt with green pinstripes, a decent pair of jeans and hi-tops. I think this was the most dressed up I have seen him. Usually he would wear some kind of baseball T-shirt, which he had a variety of, and jeans. It's not that I mind that kind of style of dress, it's just that I was hoping that he wouldn't show up tonight like that, because I would have felt over dressed.

"What's up? he said as he walked into my apartment. He's almost a foot taller than I am, which is 5 feet 4 inches, so I kind of have to look up to him when he talks. I couldn't help checking him out again. Peter was looking better and better from head to toe. The shirt he was wearing brought out his crystal green eyes. Peter has the kind of eyes that seem to look right into your soul. I checked out more of him, but I won't go into that.

"I'm all set, let's go," I said.

"Where are we going for dinner?" asked Peter.

"Well, there's a seafood restaurant right on Nantasket Beach called "Jeramiah's By The Sea." From what I've heard, it's supposed to be pretty good," I suggested this trying not to sound like I planned it out.

"Well, I'm not a big seafood fan, but I'll try it," he responded.

"Are you sure? We can go someplace else if you want," I said.

"No, it's alright, we'll go there," Peter said as we were walking to his car. "It's no big deal."

We got to "Jeramiah's" and quickly discovered that it wasn't by the sea. It was across the street from the sea, which you couldn't even see from inside. We thought that its title was misleading, so we decided to call it "Jeramiah's Across The Street From The Sea." The interior of the place

wasn't bad and the food was pretty good. Our waiter asked us if we wanted something to drink, so we both ordered beers. Peter wasn't of age yet, his birthday was in two weeks, but last fall he took his older brother's information down to the registry and got a new license with his picture on it. Peter ordered a Budweiser and I ordered a Corona with a twist of lime.

"Corona, huh?" he teased.

"With a twist of lime," I added.

The waiter came back and took our order. Peter had steak, with mashed potatoes and green beans, while I had a salad with shrimp scampi.

"You're not having any salad?" I asked.

"Nope. Don't need it," he replied in that manly tone of voice.

"You need your roughage, you know," I teased back.

"I've got all the roughage I need," He teased back.

"You're a meat and potatoes man, aren't you?" I said as I smiled at him. I smiled a lot that night.

"You got it, nothing but the best for me," Peter said, smiling back.

We got through dinner by talking about the usual stuff, politics, school, etc. It was around 9 p.m. when we left the restaurant. We had an hour and a half until we had to be at the comedy club we were going to, so we had plenty of time to kill. We drove to this spot on the ocean that I found in high school. From this spot you can see Boston in the left corner, Logan and the ocean in front of you, and a lighthouse on the right. It was the perfect spot.

At this point, Peter started chain smoking and so did I. I have never seen him smoke so much, so that was a hint to me that he was just as nervous as I was. There was silence for what seemed for ever until I broke it. We started talking about high school, the jobs we had in school, and just about anything else I could think of to keep things moving. I kept hoping that he would kiss me. It was the perfect place for it, we had the ocean, the moonlight and the rest of the view. I knew I didn't want to make the first move, even though I considered myself to be pretty bold at times. I just couldn't do it. What if he didn't want to?

What if he pulled away? Even worse, what if he looked at me and said, "What are you doing?" I couldn't do it.

"You think we ought to get going?" he said, breaking the silence.

"Yeah, sure. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to bore you." I said apologetically.

"No, don't apologize. I kind of enjoyed it myself," Peter said, trying to reassure me.

We got to the comedy club and I paid for our tickets. The deal between us was that he'd pay for dinner and drinks and I would pay for the comedy club and drinks. We sat in the corner of the room just before the show started. Peter was still chain smoking. The waitress came over and asked us what we wanted to drink. Peter ordered another Bud and I ordered a Pearl Harbor.

"Pearl Harbor? I don't know about you Dianne. You should have a real drink, like I am, not that fruity stuff or Corona with lime," he taunted with a sly grin on his face.

"I like my drinks fruity and I like my beer limey, thank you very much," I said back, giving him my sly grin.

We didn't talk much while the comedians were on. The two opening comedians were pretty funny. Peter was laughing a lot, which was a good sign that he was having fun. He isn't exactly the kind of person who grabs his sides and lets out a good belly laugh. After each comedian left the stage, the waitress came back. Peter ordered a beer for himself and a Pearl Harbor for me. When the waitress would come back with our drinks, I would reach for my purse to pay the waitress, but Peter would get to it first.

"I've got it, Dianne," he said as he leaned towards me giving me one of those looks that made me fall for him in the first place.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Don't worry about it, I've got it," he nodded.

In the middle of the headlining act the waitress came back to tell us that it was last call. We both ordered our last drinks for the night. When the waitress came back again, I was definitely going to pay for this round, but once again he pulled out his wallet before I got the chance.

"You don't have to do this, you know," I told him.

"I want to," Peter replied.

I let it go at that. Soon the show ended and the houselights came on. The host of the night announced that the club next door was still open and admission was free if you showed your ticket to the comedy club. I asked Peter if he wanted to go. He replied that he had to get up early to go to work. As he drove me home, we didn't speak much. I was getting kind of tired and I think he was too. It took us around thirty minutes to get to my house from the comedy club. I wished that it took longer. I didn't want this night to end and it seemed to be ending all too quickly for me. As he pulled up in my driveway, I just sat there and looked at him for a second.

"Well Peter, thanks for a great time," I said as I smiled at him.

"I had a good time too," he replied, looking at me as he smiled back.

We sat there for what was probably only a minute, but it seemed longer. I was trying to think of something funny to say as he was playing with the steering wheel and looking at me kind of shyly.

"What time do you have to get up for work tomorrow," was the only thing that I could get out.

"I have to get up at 7:30 and be at work by 8 o'clock," he said.

"I bet that will be a lot of fun," I said.

"A blast!" Peter said with a hint of sarcasm.

We sat there for another minute. As for myself, I didn't want him to go.

"I better get going, I have to get up early," he said, breaking the silence.

"Yeah, I've got to get some sleep too," I replied.

"I'll see ya, on Monday. I'll wait until you get to the door," Peter said kind of quietly.

"O.K. Thanks again. See ya," I said waiting for some spontaneous romance.

"See ya, Dianne," Peter replied.

I got out of the car and walked up the driveway to the backdoor. I looked back at him and waved. Then he honked his horn and drove away.

* * *



by Scott Dworman

Social People

Social people believe
The world is a set of triangles.
To end at the apex is painful,
The corners of the base
Constantly pulling,
Feeling lonely, left out of the connection,
Pulling, Pulling,
Wanting an unequilateral amount.
Less lineage,
Apex stretching, shifting,
Side to side,
Trying to find an equal setting
That all angles can enjoy.

Opposite angles can never
Look each other straight,
And angles can be sharp and hard.

I prefer the smooth whole circumference of circles.

-Phil-

Your Significant Other

Sometimes they are hard to find,
especially the right one.
When you start to look,
they are nowhere to be found.
But when you begin to hang loose,
you will stumble on them, like a ton of bricks,
they can always be found.

A significant other brings a person happiness,
confidence,
stability,
and most important,
love into your life.

These are people you want to share,
grow,
develop,
and unite with feeding off each other
like water does to its roots
in order for it to become strong and healthy.

My significant other
has helped me with all of these areas,
and she has been the fertilizer
that has helped me become the giant redwood
that I am today.

As long as I have her to water me,
and give me her sunlight,
I will never dry up and wilt away.

-Brett Nudelman-